

Week of March 10, 2003: MaineDOT Flash Facts

Topic: Proper passing

Some Maine Crash Facts:

Improper passing caused these leading crash types from 1999 to 2001

Rear End/Sideswipe-1082 crashes (1 fatality, 339 injuries)

Intersection Movement- 303 crashes (1 fatality, 108 injuries)

Run Off Road- 104 crashes (2 fatalities, 78 injuries)

Head On/Sideswipe- 91 crashes (9 fatalities, 96 injuries)

(Even though Run Off Road and Head On are number 3. and 4. in frequency, they top the list for fatalities.)

Monday:

Opener:

Passing the car or truck in front of you when it's going well under the speed limit doesn't seem like a big challenge. But according to the MaineDOT, improper passing leads to hundreds of injuries a year. More after the break.

Flash Facts:

Hundreds of crashes a year are the result of poor passing decisions. Before you put yourself, your passengers, oncoming traffic and the vehicle being passed at risk, consider whether you are in a dangerous passing situation.

Passing is NOT safe when:

- You do not have a clear line of sight. Remember, if you and the oncoming car are both going 55 mph, the distance between you is closing at 110 mph. That's about 500 feet in three seconds
- You are anywhere near an intersection.
- The person in front of you is driving erratically.
- There is a double yellow line.
- Be aware of dips in the road that can hide oncoming vehicles.

Be a road model and pass safely, It's not worth the risk.

Wednesday:

Opener:

What happens on your way to work when you're behind a slow driver on a two-lane road? For most people, the urge to tailgate is strong. Is this ever a good idea? More after the break.

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Flash Facts:

You're on your way to work and the driver in front of you is going really slowly. What can you do? The MaineDOT wants you to know what your options are:

- Please, avoid the urge to tailgate. Maintain a safe distance. Tailgating can make the driver ahead anxious and distracted, which might even make them go more slowly.
- Relax. On average, passing a slow driver saves you less than 5 minutes on a thirty-minute drive. With intersection stops and other traffic delays, you will likely arrive at the same time as the other driver!

Please -be a road model and drive safely.

Friday:**Opener:**

What's the most common result of unsafe passing? You may be surprised. More after the break.

Flash Facts:

What happens when you pass unsafely? You can crash. The MaineDOT wants you to know that more than two-thirds of crashes due to improper passing are rear-enders or sideswipe crashes. The other third result in more serious Head-On or Run Off Road crashes. Why do rear end and sideswipe crashes occur? Either the driver pulls out unsafely, can't get back in their lane, or traffic slows unexpectedly just as the driver is speeding up to pass.

To make sure this doesn't happen to you, you should:

- Maintain a safe distance. This gives you much better visibility ahead so you can see potentially dangerous oncoming vehicles or traffic conditions.
- Estimate if the pass is really worth it. If there is a long line of cars, you're not going to accomplish anything by moving up one or two.
- Use your rearview mirror, NOT your side mirror, to make sure the pass is complete before re-entering the lane. This allows a reasonable gap between you and the vehicle being passed.

Passing is risky. Be a road model and make sure your decision to pass is a safe one for everyone.